

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

Please rewrite the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An image pickup apparatus comprising:  
an image pickup device which picks for picking up an image of an object to be recorded;  
~~an operation unit which controls a release switch for controlling an image pickup operation of said image pickup device, said operating unit release switch having a first actuation operation and a second actuation operation; and~~  
a white balance control unit, having a first information acquisition mode of operation for acquiring information about white balance before said second actuation operation by ~~said operation unit~~ and executing an image pickup operation of said image pickup device in accordance with said second actuation operation of ~~said operation unit~~ at a timing after said first actuation operation, and a second information acquisition mode of operation for acquiring information about white balance in accordance with said second actuation operation, wherein said white balance control unit controls white balance of an image picked up in accordance with said second actuation operation, on the basis of the information about white balance obtained in said first and said second information acquisition operations.

2. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a display unit which displays an image picked up by said image pickup device, said white balance control unit controls white balance of the image displayed by said display unit, and the information about white balance acquired in the first information acquisition mode uses information about the white balance of the image displayed by said display unit.

3. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said white balance control unit computes information about white balance in the first information acquisition mode on the basis of an image picked up by said image pickup device at the first operation timing.

4. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said white balance control unit uses information about white balance which is used for controlling white balance of the image displayed by said display unit at the first operation, as information about white balance in the first information acquisition mode.

5. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said white balance control unit acquires information about white balance in the second information acquisition mode on the basis of the image picked up in accordance with the second operation.

6. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

a strobe unit which illuminates an object; and

a storage unit which stores information about white balance when said strobe unit illuminates the object,

wherein said white balance control unit computes information about white balance of the image picked up in accordance with the second operation by using a white balance coefficient, as an initial value, which is obtained on the basis of information about white balance acquired on the basis of the first operation and information about white balance stored in said storage unit, when said white balance control unit causes said strobe unit to illuminate the object in the first information acquisition mode.

7. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said white balance control unit controls white balance of the image picked up in accordance with the second operation on the basis of a white balance coefficient computed on the basis of computed information about white balance and information about white balance stored in said storage unit, when said white balance control unit causes said strobe unit to illuminate the object in the first information acquisition mode.

8. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said white balance control unit controls white balance of the image picked

up in accordance with the second operation on the basis of information about white balance acquired in the second information acquisition mode information about white balance stored in said storage unit, when said white balance control unit causes said strobe unit to illuminate the object in the second information acquisition mode.

9. (Currently Amended) An image pickup method comprising:  
an image pickup step for picking up an image of an object to be recorded;

[[an]] a release switch operation step of operating an image pickup controlling for controlling said image pickup of the object step, said release switch operation step having a first actuation operation and a second actuation operation; and

a control step, having a first information acquisition ~~mode of operation for acquiring information about white balance before [[a]] said second actuation operation in said operation step and executing an image pickup operation in the execution of said image pickup step in accordance with said second actuation operation in said operation step at a timing after [[a]] said first actuation operation in said operation step, and a second information acquisition mode of operation for acquiring information about white balance in accordance with said second actuation operation in said operation step, wherein said control step controls white balance of an image picked up in accordance with said second actuation operation, on~~

the basis of the information about white balance obtained in the first and second information acquisition operations.

10. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 9, further comprising a display step of displaying an image picked up in the image pickup step, wherein said control step controls white balance of the displayed image, and the information about white balance acquired in the first information acquisition mode uses information about the white balance of the image displayed in said display step.

11. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 9, wherein said control step computes information about white balance in the first information acquisition mode on the basis of an image picked up in the image pickup step at the first operation.

12. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 10, wherein said control step uses information about white balance which is used for controlling white balance of the image displayed in said display step at the first operation timing, as information about white balance in the first information acquisition mode.

13. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 9, wherein said control step acquires information about white balance in the second

information acquisition mode on the basis of the image picked up in accordance with the second operation.

14. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 9, further comprising:

an illumination step of illuminating an object;

a storing step of storing information about white balance when the object is illuminated in said illumination step; and

wherein said control step computes information about white balance of the image picked up in accordance with the second operation by using a white balance coefficient, as an initial value, which is obtained on the basis of information about white balance acquired on the basis of the first operation and stored information about white balance, when the object is illuminated in said illumination step in the first information acquisition mode.

15. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 14, wherein said control step controls white balance of the image picked up in accordance with the second operation on the basis of a white balance coefficient computed on the basis of computed information about white balance and stored information about white balance, when the object is illuminated in said illumination step in the first information acquisition mode.

16. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 14, wherein said control step controls white balance of the image picked up in accordance with the second operation on the basis of information about white balance acquired in the second information acquisition mode and stored information about white balance, when the object is illuminated in said illumination step in the second information acquisition mode.

17. (Currently Amended) A recording medium for computer-readable storing a program for executing an image pickup method, the image pickup method comprising:

an image pickup step for picking up an image of an object to be recorded;

[[an]] a release switch operation step of controlling for controlling said image pickup of the object step, said release switch operation step having a first actuation operation and a second actuation operation; and

a control step, having a first information acquisition mode of operation for acquiring information about white balance before [[a]] said second actuation operation in said operation step and executing an image pickup operation in the execution of said image pickup step in accordance with said second actuation operation in said operation step at a timing after said first actuation operation in said operation step, and a second information acquisition mode of operation for acquiring information about

white balance in accordance with said second actuation operation ~~in said~~  
~~operation step~~, wherein said control step controls white balance of an  
image picked up in accordance with said second actuation operation, on  
the basis of the information about white balance obtained in the first and  
second information acquisition operations.

18. (Previously Presented) A medium according to claim 17, wherein  
the method further comprising a display step of displaying an image  
picked up in said image pickup step, said control step controls white  
balance of the displayed image, and the information about white balance  
acquired in the first information acquisition mode uses information about  
the white balance of the image displayed by said display step.

19. (Previously Presented) A medium according to claim 18, wherein  
said control step computes information about white balance in the first  
information acquisition mode on the basis of an image picked up in the  
image pickup means at the first operation.

20. (Previously Presented) A medium according to claim 18, wherein  
said control step uses information about white balance which is used for  
controlling white balance of the image displayed in the display step at the  
first operation timing, as information about white balance in the first  
information acquisition mode.

21. (Previously Presented) A medium according to claim 17, wherein said control step acquires information about white balance in the second information acquisition mode on the basis of the image picked up in accordance with the second operation.

22. (Previously Presented) A medium according to claim 17, wherein the method further comprising:

an illumination step of illuminating an object;

a storing step of storing information about white balance when the object is illuminated in said illumination step; and

computing information about white balance of the image picked up in accordance with the second operation by using a white balance coefficient, as an initial value, which is obtained on the basis of information about white balance acquired on the basis of the first operation and stored information about white balance, when the object is illuminated in said illumination step in the first information acquisition mode.

23. (Previously Presented) A medium according to claim 22, wherein said control step controls white balance of the image picked up in accordance with the second operation on the basis of a white balance coefficient computed on the basis of computed information about white

balance and stored information about white balance, when the object is illuminated in said illumination step in the first information acquisition mode.

24. (Previously Presented) A medium according to claim 22, wherein said control step controls white balance of the image picked up in accordance with the second operation on the basis of information about white balance acquired in the second information acquisition mode and stored information about white balance, when the object is illuminated in said illumination step in the second information acquisition mode.

Claims 25 and 26. (Canceled)